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PARTICIPANTS: Emilio Mignone, Permanent Assembly for Human Rights  
William H. Hallman, Political Counselor, American  
Embassy, Buenos Aires

DATE : July 30, 1979

SUBJECT : Argentine Police Raid on Printing House

Background. Several newspapers reported on July 29 and July 30 that on Saturday afternoon July 28 police personnel from the First Precinct raided the Alemann Printing Company, where they confiscated galley plates and other materials having to do with a publication regarding the disappeared. According to the same reports, police authorities surrounded the building (which is located near the "Casa Rosada") and prevented people from leaving between about 5 in the afternoon and 6:30.

Although the company does a large amount of job printing, it is best known for the newspaper Argentinisches Tageblatt, the newspaper which serves Argentina's German speaking community and is published by the family of Juan Alemann, the present secretary for treasury in the Ministry of Economy, and his brother Roberto, a former Economy Minister. (The family is of Swiss German descent.)

According to a communique issued subsequently by the federal police: "Personnel of this organization in compliance with Executive Decree No. 1829 enacted a procedure yesterday afternoon in a building in which the Alemann and Company print shop is located. They proceeded to confiscate 3,500 copies, printing plates and other materials related to a publication. The contents of that publication asserted certain activities unacceptable to the public forces, attributing acts without describing those persons responsible. The decree cited prohibits the distribution, sale, circulation and partial or total reproduction of the publication by whatever means throughout the national territory.

The police proceedings took place only in the commercial printing section -- apart from the daily newspaper and its presses -- where several kinds of publications of persons outside the company are done.

What Mignone Added. Mr. Mignone explained that the confiscated publication was in fact a printed version of the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights most recent tabulation of the disappeared, containing some 5,200 names. The Assembly had been rebuffed by several newspapers. The Buenos Aires Herald declined to publish

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the list on grounds of costs involved and other factors. (The Herald has a policy of not accepting human rights announcements as paid advertisement, as do other newspapers, so it would have been faced with the problem of a large news printing job the list would have entailed. The editor of Prensa, whose owner-editor Gainza had promised to accept the list as advertisement, subsequently declined to accept the list when Assembly members visited his office to pay for the announcement. The Assembly had therefore ordered 30,000 commercially printed versions of the disappeared list from the Alemann Company, which the organization expected to mail out to large numbers of people in Argentina and abroad.

Mignone heard that in fact the police had visited the printing company the day before, a Friday, and had taken enough material to indicate the nature of the printing job the Alemann Company was undertaking. He believes that the prestige of the company and the prominence of its owners caused a small flurry in government, so that when police authorities came the following afternoon they did so armed with a carefully drawn statement which clearly distinguished between the newspaper the Alemann family owns and its other printing activities. The Permanent Assembly is now studying what legal action can be taken to regain what it regards as in part its property. A large deposit had been left with the Alemann Company for the printing job.

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